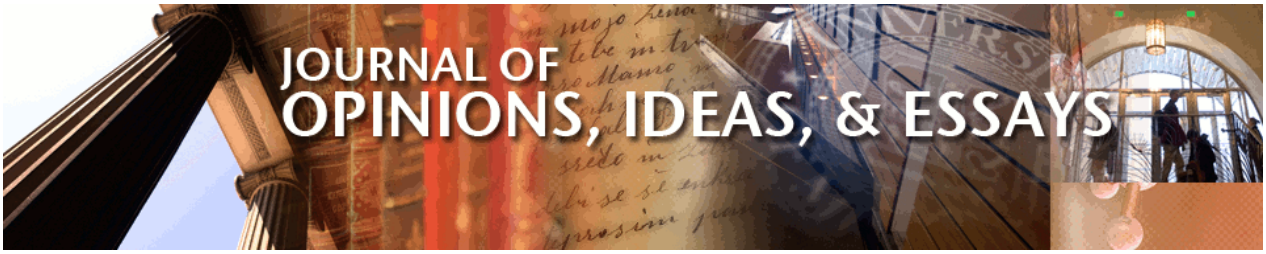

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Unanswered Questions?
Reflections of an Historical Sort on Library School Closures

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Abstract: Between 1978 and 1994, sixteen American graduate programs in library/information science closed. The author reviewed library and historical literature for discussion, analysis, or interpretation of these closures. This examination revealed a nearly incessant and cantankerous call and response between and among library educators and historians that took place in the midst of these closings, extending into the early twenty-first century. It also demonstrated that library/information science practitioners and analysts suffered a kind of professional, systemic shock that made them unable to arrive at a definitive, analytical conclusion concerning fundamental conditions that ultimately resulted in closing nearly a third of the American Library Association's accredited programs. At the same time, these discussions outlined and defined political, economic, educational, and social conditions relevant to the closures. When the dust finally settled, a clearer, if incomplete understanding emerged of external and internal causal factors contributing to these closings. A brief case study from the closing of the Library School at the University of Minnesota in 1985 is included to illustrate one of the overlooked internal factors within universities—the administrative location of a professional school of library education within the institution—that is a pivotal, defining factor in the history of these closures. This case study elucidates what library educators and historians discussed but never resolved: that each closure was a complex event, unique in some respects, but ultimately explicable when considered as part of a larger pattern, system or model. Ultimately, these "unanswered questions" should be considered input variables that may allow us the opportunity to examine contemporary conditions, make meaningful predictions, and steer the profession away from any prospect of foundering on the rocks of repeated mistakes.

Introduction

"*A profession that neglects, forgets, or ignores its past is a profession that has no future*" (Marshall).

Between 1978 and 1994, sixteen graduate library and information schools in the United States closed their doors (American Library Association. Office for Accreditation, "AL Aside--List: R.I.P."). It is an impressive list and includes the first school of its type, founded by Melvil Dewey (Columbia) in 1884, and the

institution known for training many upper-level academic library administrators (University of Chicago), established in 1928. These shuttered programs and their date of closure included:

1978 University of Oregon School of Librarianship
1981 Alabama A & M University School of Library Media
1983 Western Michigan University School of Library and Information Science
1984 SUNY/Geneseo School of Library and Information Science
1984 University of Mississippi Graduate School of Library and Information Science
1985 University of Minnesota Library School
1985 Ball State University Department of Library and Information Science
1985 University of Denver Graduate School of Librarianship and Information Management
1986 Case Western Reserve University, Matthew A. Baxter School of Information and Library Science
1988 Emory University Division of Library and Information Management
1988 Vanderbilt University/George Peabody College for Teachers, Department of Library and Information Science
1990 University of Chicago Graduate Library School
1992 Columbia University School of Library Service
1993 Brigham Young University School of Library and Information Sciences
1994 Northern Illinois University Department of Library and Information Studies
1994 The University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley did not make the American Library Association (ALA) list but also closed in May 1994. The University of Southern California also failed to make the American Libraries list but is included in ALA's historical list; USC's program ceased in 1986. The University of Denver revived its program in 2003.

Professional publications and the general media noted these losses and those that followed: Clark Atlanta University shuttered its program in 2005; Southern Connecticut State University had its accreditation withdrawn in October 2013 (American Library Association. Office for Accreditation, *Historical List of Accredited Programs*). Each account included its share of anguish, remorse, finger-pointing, recrimination, or victimization. General narratives of the closings hinted at reasons for demise, but offered little in-depth description or penetrating analysis. The library profession was "oddly mute" (Paris, "Library School Closings - The Need for Action" 259).

How do we account for this lack of informed analysis leading to silence? Or is Paris mistaken in her characterization? Instead of a bookish silence, were professional library educators and historians exhibiting another kind of behavior? Was their reticence masking something else?

My premise—demonstrated by a nearly incessant and cantankerous call and response between and among library educators and historians that took place in the midst of these closings, extending into the early twenty-first century—is that library

and information science practitioners and analysts suffered a kind of professional, systemic shock that made them—and continues to render them—unable to arrive at a definitive, analytical conclusion concerning fundamental conditions that ultimately resulted in closing nearly a third of the ALA's accredited programs. As a result, the field may be dangerously close to repeating some of the same mistakes it committed decades ago.

For example, various studies and discussions from the period point to student enrollment as a key issue. A typical line of reasoning runs thus: a growth in federal funding of higher education in the 1950s and 1960s coupled with a change in status for library education to the level of graduate programs led to increasing program enrollments during the 1960s and an enrollment "bubble" in the 1970s that ultimately burst, resulting in declining enrollments and ultimately program closures over the next two decades. Surviving schools aggressively competed for students, faculty, facilities, and funding in order to demonstrate their viability in an increasingly dynamic field heavily influenced by technological change.

This line of reasoning raises a number of questions: Do enrollment data support this narrative arc? And, if so, do contemporary conditions mirror those from the late 1970s to mid-1990s, thus supporting our argument of a profession prone to repeating its mistakes? Or, as Brett Bonfield, executive director of the Princeton, New Jersey Public Library puts the question: Is the United States training too many librarians or too few (Bonfield)? How many library schools are necessary to sustain the employment needs of our nation's libraries? Has the profession survived the shock and moved on? Or has the profession neglected its past, remains in shock, and thus endangers its future? These are some of the unanswered questions we seek to explore.

Other unanswered questions fall within political, economic, educational, or social contexts. In support of my argument that professional educators and historians in the field of library and information science were unable to reach *definitive* conclusions on the fundamental reasons for program closures, and that this indecisiveness creates a potential for repeating programmatic mistakes, I will investigate and critique those contexts that produced such favorable conditions in which to contemplate and execute library science program closings in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The sometimes irritable or belligerent discussions that took place between the late 1970s and early twenty-first century outlined and defined political, economic, educational, and social conditions relevant to the closures. When the dust finally settled, a clearer understanding emerged of external and internal causal factors contributing to these closings. Outside the university, state or federal government actions, economic or societal conditions, professional organizations or related agency activities, and/or the dynamic environment of higher education created conducive climates for programmatic termination. Inside the university, circumstances produced by faculty activity or governance, underlying forces within disciplines or programs, actions by departments or colleges, administrative policies or practice, and/or student issues primed institutional decision makers in a direction toward program elimination. (See Appendix)

A final element in my argument employs a case study from the closing of the

Library School at the University of Minnesota in 1985. Here, I focus on one of those internal factors within the university—the administrative location of a professional school of library education within the institution—to illustrate a pivotal, defining factor in the history of these closures.

This case study elucidates what library educators and historians discussed but never resolved: that each closure between 1978 and 2013 was a complex event, unique in some respects, but ultimately explicable when considered as part of a larger pattern, system or model. Ultimately, these "unanswered questions" should be considered input variables that may allow us the opportunity to examine contemporary conditions, make meaningful predictions, and steer the profession away from any prospect of foundering on the rocks of repeated mistakes.

A Brief Look at Enrollments

Since questions about enrollments found their way into decades of discussion and debate, it is worth spending a few moments with the numbers. Do enrollment data support the narrative arc of increasing program enrollments during the 1960s, an enrollment "bubble" in the 1970s that burst and ultimately resulted in program closures? Sadly, enrollment data are not available for the years 1965, 1968, and 1974-1978 (Swigger 39–40). Figure 1 indicates the gap in data for those years using a red line. From 1949 the numbers trend upward, from 2,501 in 1949 to a high of 10,793 in 1973, an increase of 8,292 students (331.5%) in 24 years. The absence of data for the next five years does not allow for any analysis, but supposing the bubble began to expand in 1967—when enrollment measured 7,974—then the bubble burst sometime between 1974 and 1982 when the collapsing trend bottomed out at 7,811 students. From 1983 until 2008 the data trends positively, with bumps along the way. In 1987, enrollment reaches 10,049 and is followed by a downturn of 5.8% to 9,469 two years later. For the next three years, enrollment climbs again to 12,379 in 1992 before experiencing roller-coaster-like declines and gains, finally settling at 11,241 students in 1999. For the next six years enrollment soars to 18,271 before experiencing a one year decline of 2.3% in 2006. The final two years of data show increases, to an all-time high of 19,340 enrolled students in 2008.

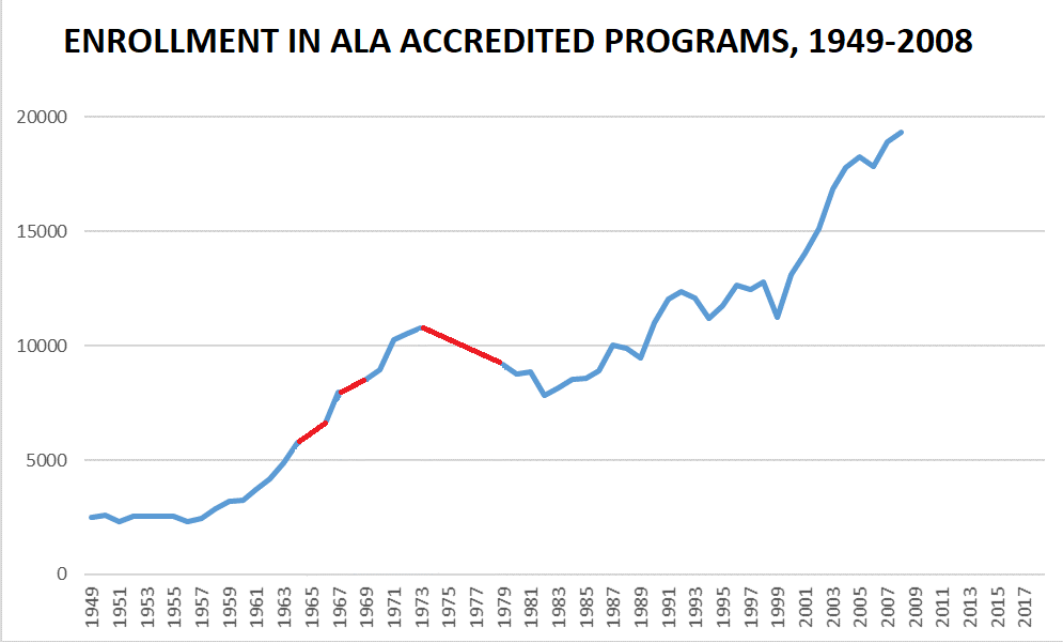

Figure 1. Enrollments in ALA Accredited Programs, 1949-2008

What do enrollment data indicate in terms of increase or decline for the period under consideration, 1978-1994? The question, simple as it is, was understood differently by arguing parties at the time. Some characterized enrollments as "dwindling" or "declining" while others described them as "rising." It is a matter of perspective, as observed from a particular point in time. The numbers are clear (Figure 2). Starting in 1979, enrollment numbers dip from 9,180 to 7,811 in 1982. This is a drop of 1,369 students, or a 14.9% decrease in enrollment. From 1982 to 1987 enrollment increased by 2,238 individuals, or a 28.7% increase. Between 1987 and 1989 enrollment dropped slightly, by 580 (5.8%), before picking up over the next three years, reaching a high point in 1992 of 12,379. From here, enrollments dropped by 1,165 students over the next two years, a 9.4% decrease, to 11,214 in 1994. Enrollments rose or fell depending on when one viewed (and experienced) those fluctuations.

YEAR	ENROLLMENT
1979	9180
1980	8770
1981	8868
1982	7811
1983	8139
1984	8548
1985	8557
1986	8921
1987	10049
1988	9864
1989	9469
1990	11020
1991	12052
1992	12379
1993	12069
1994	11214

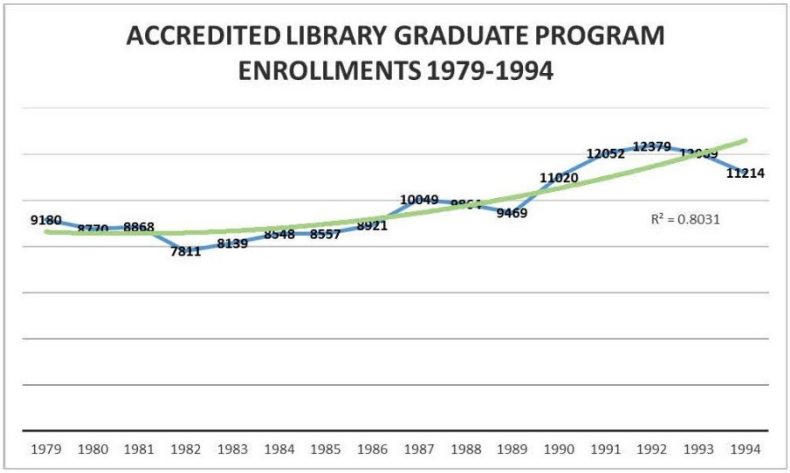

Figure 2. Enrollments in ALA Accredited Programs, 1979-1994

Origins of Discussions and Debate

Specific and extended attention to the dynamics in and causes of shutdowns in graduate library/information science education began to appear in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Marion Paris's 1986 dissertation, reworked into book form two years later under the same title, was one of the first works to address the issue (Paris, *Library School Closings: Four Case Studies*). Her analysis focused on two private and two public programs, identified in the study by the first four letters of the Greek alphabet: Alpha (University of Denver), Beta (Western Michigan University), Gamma (University of Minnesota), and Delta (Case Western Reserve University).

Three years later Paris coordinated and introduced *Perspectives on the Elimination of Graduate Programs in Library and Information Studies: A Symposium* on the pages of *The Library Quarterly*. Papers from Paris, Daniel D. Barron, Kathleen M. Heim and J. Keith Ostertag, Jeffrey Katzer, Margaret F. Stieg, and Herbert S. White offered "thoughts, perspectives, and analyses" on the various closings (Paris, "Library School Closings - The Need for Action").

Since publication of Paris's case studies, a small number of additional works have appeared under the subject "library school closings." Two of these publications concerned Columbia University's program closing, one was an American Library Association (ALA) special committee report, another a background paper for a Kellogg Foundation symposium, and one last addressed library/information services education in California (Cole; *A Response from the Faculty of the Columbia University School of Library Service to the Report of the Provost on the School of Library Service, 13 April 1990*; American Library Association. Special Committee on Library School Closings and Shank; McCook; *Library and Information Services Education in California: A Report to the Intersegmental Program Review Council from the Staff of the California Postsecondary Education Commission*). Broadening the search to related works published between 1988 and 2014 resulted in a much larger pool, but only a small

number of titles were truly relevant to the present topic.(Conant; Standing Committee on Library Education. American Library Association. Annual Conference; Stieg, "The Closing of Library Schools: Darwinism at the University"; Totten; Stieg, *Change and Challenge in Library and Information Science Education*; Ostler et al.; Dillon and Norris; Estabrook; Wheeler; Nocera et al.; Crowley; Cox; Swigger)

What do these initial investigations tell us about the closings? Who were the active parties and what was the nature of their interaction? What were the principal points of contention? What is the context—politically, economically, educationally, socially—that helps explain this "rash" of closings? Did these initial investigations answer all the questions? What, if anything, did later historical examinations add to this picture? Taken together, are we satisfied with the final picture? Or did we miss something? It is the contention of the author that we did miss things and that there is more to explore, analyze, and interpret. But before we can identify what we missed we must look at what we found.

Opening Salvo: Marion Paris and Herbert S. White

"*The more we are confronted with the new, the greater our need for the wisdom and understanding that come from historical knowledge*" (Craig).

Of the papers from the symposium *Perspectives on the Elimination of Graduate Programs in Library and Information Studies* those by Paris, White, Stieg, Heim and Ostertag are most useful in locating principle reasons for the closures. Paris concluded that "[t]he first spate of closings was almost certainly a delayed reaction to the tight job market, dwindling enrollments, and changing student demographics that had characterized much of American library education during the early seventies." She also speculated: "Perhaps there were too many library schools, and natural selection was at work" ("Library School Closings - The Need for Action" 260). Her research, however, pointed to something more concrete.

> [The] principal finding was that, whereas financial exigency had been named by university officials as having motivated the closings, other factors were involved as well. Those included the relative isolation of the library schools within their own university communities, unresponsive and complacent library school leadership, a lack of credible justification for the schools' existence, mission redefinition by university administrators, turf battles with such departments and divisions as computer science and business, and poor quality as determined by intra-institutional evaluations. Accreditation by the American Library Association would not save a doomed program from elimination. Despite the patterns identified, however, the closings still appeared to be localized phenomena that fundamentally were unrelated to one another ("Library School Closings - The Need for Action" 260–61).

According to Paris, funding concerns as a principal motivation for the closings were an administrative smokescreen. "[U]niversity administrators did little to dispel that notion. Finances were what the public understood, and in the absence of

explanations that were probably more truthful but much less palatable, the simplest reason, that of financial exigency, was the one most readily believed and accepted" ("Library School Closings - The Need for Action" 260).

White, who chaired Paris's doctoral committee at Indiana University, agreed with the latter's findings but gave them a political spin. "There has been little continuity from one library school closing to the next. Each case has been decided not on its own merits, but on its own politics" (White 266). Money, in terms of program income and expense, was part of the political equation, but "[b]ecause those facts of life have long been so, they cannot serve to explain the recent rash of library school closings.… Although financial exigency does not directly cause the closing of library schools, it provides a rationale." White argued that one-time costs to close a program were "substantial" while the ultimate savings to an institution "may take years…and even then the savings are inconsequential." He acknowledged overbuilding in the 1960s, "when every institution needed one of everything," but saw the later evaluation and closing of programs as "a ceremonial exercise aimed at creating the appearance of a new style of cost-effective management, even when the structure of the university makes that difficult if not impossible to achieve." In this environment "victims must be found." Savings could be found "from eliminating large programs and major divisions." But they "are also too powerful and too deeply entrenched to be touched" (White 263). If politics is power (or perception of the same), then according to White any feminized program, e.g. librarianship, nursing, social work, or education, was doomed.

Another threat came from within the professoriate, "from our academic colleagues, who do not know us, do not understand us, and do not appreciate us." Even academic librarians shared in the blame "by de-emphasizing the M.L.S. as the terminal degree for work in their libraries and by insisting on a subject master's or doctorate that may or may not be useful." White concluded: "It would appear that even we do not consider our own terminal degree to be worth very much" (264).

Politics, as White understood them, boiled down to a "grand strategy."

> The grand strategy, therefore, is for university administrators to identify a victim (perhaps as a lioness chooses an individual zebra before beginning her hunt), to blame the entire affair on monetary or space problems—or whatever nonacademic issues are convenient and just outside academic control—and to justify the decision already reached. Such decisions must be seen as making sense to outsiders. As may be learned from a number of the evaluative documents whose effect ultimately closed library schools, the chairs of review committees adroitly demonstrated that what had already been decided made eminent sense (264).

Why were library schools targeted? According to White it was because "[w]e are small, we are weak, we are isolated, and we are invisible" (264).

Early Wrangling: The *Library Quarterly* Symposium versus Stephen P. Foster

Margaret Stieg, at the time of the Symposium a professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama, viewed the issue

from the broader context of higher education. “The move of library schools into universities following the publication of the Williamson report tied the fortunes of library education firmly to those of higher education. They shared in the good times; now they seem to be bearing the brunt of the bad” (Stieg, “The Closing of Library Schools: Darwinism at the University” 266). She agreed with Paris and White that “[e]ach library school closing [was] a unique event with its own cast of characters” but argued that by 1990 “patterns [were] beginning to emerge,” that the closings were “not a series of coincidences, and that “long-term trends in American higher education have gathered strength and converged to make universities increasingly inhospitable to library education.” These trends included universities “redefining their function” and a dissolution of “the highest expression of that earlier interconnected and balanced trinity of values, teaching, research, and service” that resulted in universities “rewriting their contract with society” (“Darwinism at the University” 267). On one issue, program enrollments, White and Stieg differed in outlook. While White viewed the closings in the context of “a time of rising enrollments when job prospects for graduates have never been better” (White 263) Stieg saw “changing demographics” resulting in “declining enrollments in the near future, leading to further deterioration” (“Darwinism at the University” 267–68).

For Stieg, a major catalyst for this redefinition and dissolution was financial pressure coming from internal and external sources. “In the six decades since library schools moved out of libraries and into universities, universities have become vastly more expensive to run.” She attributed this in part to absolute and relative rising costs embedded in “diversification of instructional programs, improvement of faculty salaries, and expanding support services.” Reductions in federal government programs during the 1980s “exacerbated the situation.” The response of higher education to financial difficulties (or, perhaps, a simultaneous action) was “the importation of the management mentality into the administrative environment of universities” that produced “a harsh and unfeeling tone” and “introduced concepts like productivity to the university” (Darwinism at the University” 267–68). New values replaced old.

Stieg also highlighted other trends. “Collegiality within the academy, traditionally one of its distinguishing features, [was] evaporating.” This evaporation was hastened, in part, by widening salary differentials between disciplines. “Now, faculties [were] told in appropriate euphemisms that closing one school [meant] more for the rest, words not likely to encourage fraternal appreciation.” In a similar vein, older universities were changing their orientation “away from the local community to a supposed national constituency” (“Darwinism at the University” 267–68). Stieg argued that with this shift in alignment came an “important attitudinal change” resulting in an “effort to remain economically viable by specialization, the specialization of choice being elitism.” A university translated this elitism into a choice “to emphasize research because research is the single most important component in academic prestige.” With research and prestige came increased opportunities from business and government for universities to “use their human and physical resources to earn money” (“Darwinism at the University” 268–69).

The outlook for library education, according to Stieg, was grim. “When these long-term trends are considered in terms of library schools, the lack of congruence of the schools' strengths with university priorities is clear…. Library schools are either not good at or not in a good position to do what universities now want and are being selected out.” They were “selected out” because they cost too much and had little prospects for external support or income generation. Tuition income diminished due to declining enrollments. Most of their budgets were tied up in faculty salaries, there was a “limited market” for their research, and graduates were “not likely to make fortunes and become generous benefactors.” Whatever research library schools produced was perceived by colleagues in the liberal arts or other disciplines with derision: objects of study were seen as unworthy, employing laughable research methodologies. A professional education based on service was inconceivable to those outside librarianship. “In the academic pecking order, librarianship [was] perceived as being in the same lowly stratum as education, without the advantages of size and independence possessed by colleges of education” (“Darwinism at the University” 270–71).

Library schools also had “the disadvantage of being fundamentally local,” a characteristic that ran counter to the new outward orientation of their host institution. Students, many of them married, lived and worked in the host state, were older than students in other professional programs, did “not want to leave their families,” and were not “likely to move after they [got] their degrees.” If a university gravitated to an attitude of elitism, and if this elitism was translated into prestigious research, then, according to Stieg, library schools did not “enhance a university's elite image.” Librarians or library educators had “few high-status characteristics.” They were perceived as poor, powerless, and feminized in comparison to other professions (“Darwinism at the University” 270).

Heim and Ostertag also examined the issue of institutional power, interpreted in terms of domain and influence (Heim and Ostertag). They conceded that “[t]he sources of power are complex and ill understood by those who work in universities” but argued that “[t]he positioning of an academic unit [was] crucial to its influence over coping with uncertainty, centrality, nonsubstitutability, and subunit power—factors that Lachman views as contributory to a unit's intraorganizational power” (282–83). Elements that contributed “to a unit's relative intraorganizational status and power” included centrality, excellence, external support, field support, policy-making, and participation in governance. Centrality was understood as “a measure of a unit's importance to the fundamental mission of the organization.” Excellence was defined as “the measure of a unit's actual or perceived status within its discipline.” External support was identified in fiscal terms, for example, grants. Field support focused on a unit’s graduates and any influence they might obtain. Policy-making was recognized a translation of “research findings to the world at large through testimony before government bodies, actions at professional associations, and other critical and visible service modes” that displayed a relevance to the university’s goals or mission. Finally, participation in governance was perceived in institutional terms, where persistent “good work for the institution” would “reflect positively on the unit” (283–84).

When Heim and Ostertag examined these factors within the realm of

library/information science educators, their findings reflected a somber reality. Location of programs "almost wholly at the graduate level" meant that schools were administratively removed from the central missions of a university; they would "have a difficult time with this base of power" (286). The relative smallness of the profession and number of accredited programs also worked against schools of library and information science in terms of excellence when compared to other disciplinary programs in competition "with as many as two thousand other programs" (287). Likewise, external support was "minor compared to the efforts of other units in terms of total dollars attracted, and therefore not as influential in establishing power" (287). Library and information science programs fared better in the area of field support "if faculty [were] active in state and national associations. This may be the area in which faculty have devoted the most energy" (287).

In the arena of policy-making, Heim and Ostertag conceded that the "library and information science professoriate [was] still far from extending its influence outside of its own associations" (288). Surprisingly (or not), participation in governance, especially on essential committees "turned out to be very low" (288). They concluded: "Of all the bases of power discussed, participation in important campus governance committees appears to be quite weak for library and information science faculty" (289–90).

Stephen P. Foster took a dim view of the *Library Quarterly* symposium (Foster). He acknowledged that the closures raised "important questions about the profession" which suggested "that critical scrutiny [was] needed, not only of the processes of change that bring about the closings but also of librarianship's own rhetoric of response to the closings" (199). Foster focused his displeasure on the writings of Paris, White, and Stieg "with their intense preoccupation with librarianship's perceived lack of status as a profession, [that featured] the library school closing phenomenon as a kind of public relations problem." Foster saw this as "a somewhat constricted perspective" with the attendant rhetoric "placing the discussion of the issue almost entirely in a context of victimization with a focus on rather subjective and problematic questions of how librarians and librarianship should be regarded" (200).

Foster attempted to demolish the work of Paris, White, and Stieg. In Paris's case he aimed his discontent at her dissertation and the graduate education which produced it (Paris, *Library School Closings: Four Case Studies*). His argument was based on a criticism of her entire thesis, cloaked as a perception and a desire wrapped in a question: "If the serious research supported by the graduate programs in librarianship is not perceived to be on par with that in other programs, then should not the profession of librarianship (for purposes, initially, of survival) hold itself to a higher standard, and should not its young scholars emerging from its best graduate schools be expected to display their research virtuosity and a fresh capacity to advance the discipline with innovative dissertations" (201)? See (Biggs and Biggs) for a differing view of research by library educators. In Foster's mind, Paris's work was not groundbreaking but part of a "rather odd and anomalous spectacle of graduate library programs turning out dissertations on the dissolution of graduate library programs and conveying the impression of a profession that is moribund,

backward looking, and defensive" (201). Unfortunately, Foster's perceptions on the relative status of graduate library research are undocumented; his deconstructionist desires of an idealized dissertation are unrealized; and he skates very near an *ad hominem* fallacy. Guilt by association was hardly the argument Foster wanted to make in this case. He might have been better served by equating Paris's work with the economic construct of "creative destruction."

White fared little better in Foster's hands. The latter employed political philosophy in his examination of White's article, a piece he characterized "as Hobbesian in outlook" and "a depressing account replete with themes of victimization and alienation."(Foster 202) There is little doubt that Foster had *Leviathan* in mind, "the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." In this political universe Foster found "library education programs menaced from above by hostile university bureaucrats who [were] impressed only by size and numbers" and "undermined from within by the indifference of colleagues and the concomitant institutional isolation that it produces" (202). Foster considered White's calls for action politically naïve. Rather—and here Foster offered a useful observation—we should recognize what exists: that universities were already "widely and pervasively fragmented and compartmentalized" and "that many or most of the disciplines exist in a state of mutual isolation and indifference" (203). Foster claimed that White's "entire discussion winds up on the horns of a dilemma," a claim that in reality was a poorly executed rhetorical device which introduced a false dichotomy. Political action—one horn of the supposed dilemma— was "doomed." The solution, according to Foster, in which "librarianship has intrinsic value and a claim to respect and recognition," existed along a different path, "beyond politics" (203).

The Hobbesian theme, mixed with observations on "Darwinism" or "social Darwinism," continued with Foster's examination of Stieg (Foster 203). More was at stake than pure power. Librarianship lacked "an established theoretical core sufficient to give it full professional identity and ultimately respectability." Stieg, according to Foster, saw the profession's history as "a groping to create itself, particularly in its theoretical alignments" (204). Whether or not these creative Darwinian acts occurred within the humanities or social sciences was open to debate. Stieg viewed librarianship as "essentially humanistic" (Stieg, "The Closing of Library Schools: Darwinism at the University" 272). Foster believed her optimistic outlook was misplaced, another case of wishful thinking (204).

Perhaps unwittingly, Foster also provided a useful contextual observation on the closings, at "a period when the technology governing the production and dissemination of intellectual property (the primary material of library services) has been radically transformed and at a time when public financial support for education and educational-support institutions, like libraries, has eroded." Taken together, these forces "place[d] enormous pressure on the profession of librarianship" (Foster 199).

Other educators followed with additional attempts—or at least hints and passing comments—to explain the closures. None of them took the matter to the same depth as Paris. Few additional insights surfaced to complete the overall picture.

Esther Dyer and Daniel O'Connor looked to the future, hoping that professionals

and educators would rise to the occasion (Dyer and O'Connor). Noting that Minnesota's closing declaration "sent shock waves through most of the library schools in the country, making them fearful of a domino effect," Dyer and O'Connor cautioned stakeholders of their "ability to recast the professional training of librarians for either survival or elimination" (860, 863). Pointing to causes, they observed: "While there are many reasons why library schools are in jeopardy, one recurring fact cannot be escaped: the number of students is drastically declining. There has been a forty percent drop in the number of MLS degrees awarded in the last eight years" (860). An anonymous school director in communication with Dyer and O'Connor added fuel to the fire. "Library schools have had from thirty to forty years to prove worthy of graduate education, and yet most will be found lacking when the university applies standards from other graduate schools. There is no research base and no cumulative base of knowledge. Librarianship is facing intellectual bankruptcy as well as financial insolvency" (860).

Two library educators went on record for Dyer and O'Connor. Jane Anne Hannigan, described as a "frequent critic of library education," did not pull any punches: "library education today is not a question of the provision of quality education but a question of financial survival. Library schools are facing the guillotine, and soon many heads will roll." George D'Elia, recently appointed (and beleaguered) director at Minnesota "fear[ed] that library schools may be relegated to the second tier of higher education—the state colleges." Dyer and O'Connor added another possible factor. "The Federal government's proposed reduction in the status of librarians may have some indirect relationship to the current crisis confronting some library schools." They argued that such a change might "filter through to state and municipal civil service requirements" and "trigger a number of schools to adopt a two-year program" (862).

Charles E. Slattery noted "dramatic evidence…in the rash of library school closings during the last decade" [1984-1994] and that "[r]easons were not immediately forthcoming" (Slattery). He also observed: "With the exception of some tentative speculation published in the early 1980s, this issue was not confronted by the library and library education communities in any direct or unified fashion. There seems to have been a wish to ignore it, in the hope that it would go away" (195). Slattery's evidence included familiar administrative rationales and previously mentioned motives: "a program's inability to make a case for 'centrality' to the institutional mission" along with "[s]imple political expediency and opportunism." Added to this were other factors such as administrative values and policies (characterized by some as "corrupt" or "misguided"), smallness and vulnerability of programs (for which Slattery seems to agree with Stieg's "social Darwinism"), and accreditation by the American Library Association, which he characterized as "costly" and "burdensome." Slattery's analysis relied heavily on Paris's study and the *Library Quarterly* symposium papers. His article added little not already known, but did continue the drumbeat of library education in crisis. Citing Richard M. Dougherty's editorial in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Slattery concluded that by 1991 "educators and practitioners had been primed for then-ALA-President Doughterty's candid appraisal of a situation bordering on disaster in library education…." (Dougherty; Slattery 195).

Continuing Squabbles: Ostler, Dahlin, and Willardson versus Dillon and Norris

Larry J. Ostler, Therrin C. Dahlin, and J. D. Willardson lumped all of the existing arguments and evidence for the closings into one of two categories: the "business-management perspective" or the "classical-scholarship perspective" (Ostler et al.; Ostler and Dahlin). Under the business-management perspective—exemplified by Paris, Dyer and O'Connor—a school's demise was explained by "deficiencies in leadership and marketing" or "an inability to secure outside funding and university support" (Ostler et al. 2). Ostler and company viewed this perspective as "narrow" and unable to "account adequately for the influence of forces coming from the surrounding social context" (Ostler et al. 3). According to the classical-scholarship perspective—epitomized by the writings of Jesse Shera and Ralph Beals—schools closed because they "failed to strengthen their curricula by tapping the resources of the universities with which they [were] allied. This failure contributed to intellectual poverty and stagnation in library school curriculum" (Ostler et al. 3). This impoverishment came about because library educators were unable to "recognize and adapt" to societal changes; the information age passed them by. Holders of the classical-scholarship perspective continued an age-old professional argument: "insufficient attention [had] been paid to…intellectual history and theoretical foundations…and too much effort…on pragmatic concerns" (Ostler et al. 3). Ostler, Dahlin, and Willardson rightly concluded that "these two perspectives do not provide a complete picture of the problem." For them, the completed picture was to be found in "forces from the external social environment" (Ostler et al. 4). Unfortunately, their explication of these external forces was basic and added little. In a similar fashion, their reasoning "that the failure to plan effectively contributed to the decline and closing of some library schools" was undeveloped and superficial (Ostler et al. 37–40). Historical analysis and interpretation needed something more than "dead Germans" as a narrative construct (Ostler and Dahlin).

Andrew Dillon and April Norris brought the issue into the new century, noting the 2005 demise of the program at Clark Atlanta University. They also put the Atlanta closing in perspective: "…some 22 schools have closed their doors over the years (almost 30% of all LIS programs founded in North America), 14 of them alone in the darkest period of the field's history between 1981 and 1994" (Dillon and Norris; Mulligan). Pointing to previous work by Paris and Ostler, they observed the continuing disagreement on "causes or solutions." Explanations for program cessation continued to be grouped under broad and unsatisfactory rubrics of leadership, marketing, status, and "connectivity" (Dillon and Norris 280). While Dillon and Norris's attention focused on a presumed current "crisis" in library education (generated, in part, by Michael Gorman), their analysis (along with Gorman's critique) provided other historically relevant program closure factors worth consideration (Gorman). These elements included: state of the job market, pending retirements, technological impacts, curriculum reform, gender inequality, accreditation, geographic distribution of library schools, information science/

studies as a discipline, admission standards, tenure and promotion practices, and venues for scholarly output. Some of these aspects were touched on by earlier writers; Dillon and Norris brought them forward, as did Estabrook in her responsive essay (Estabrook).

Enter the Historians

"*I have found that the most revealing historical episodes are those characterized by a dynamic tension concerning boundary or identity, especially when information science is in contention with some other profession*" (Aspray).

If the literature on library school closures produced by library and information science educators and practitioners was sparse, then the situation was not much better for those working in the field of American library history. "At a time when library education is under fire," remarked Joanne E. Passet in 1992, "the dearth of historical research on this subject is somewhat appalling"("The Literature of American Library History, 1989-1990"). To confirm this sentiment, the author analyzed historical literature in order to capture what historians (or those of a historical bent) observed about the closures. Starting with the essay for the years 1978-1979—which coincided with the closing of the University of Oregon's School of Librarianship—an examination was made of review essays on American library history found on the pages of *The Journal of Library History* and its successor titles.

A first glimpse is found in a chapter by Heim and, ironically—given their respective closings in 1986 and 1990—in C. H. Cramer's "good, evaluative, and critical history of the Case Western Reserve Library School," and Jesse H. Shera's "The Spirit Giveth Life" on Louis Round Wilson and the University of Chicago's school (Heim; Wiegand; Cramer; Shera). Wilson's assessment of his most important contribution to library education, that is, "[d]irecting the school toward the social sciences and an emphasis on research" might have served as a useful corrective for schools that ultimately failed to heed his call (Shera). John V. Richardson's *The Spirit of Inquiry*, while not touching on Chicago's closing, provides important background on the school (Richardson). In a similar fashion, Edward G. Holley's observations on "Library Issues in the Seventies" put the closings into a larger context, while his examination of the Association of Research Libraries' minor influence on library education pointed to continuing difficulties in defining professional education ("Library Issues in the Seventies"; "The Influence of ARL on Academic Librarianship, Library Education, and Legislation").

A third work by Holley provides important background information on United States library education in the South while posing questions later answered by Robert Sidney Martin and Orvin Lee Shiflett (Holley, "The Development of Library Education in the South"; Martin and Shiflett). In the same volume as Holley's Southern history, John Mark Tucker chronicled the founding of the Peabody School and John Richardson, Jr. outlined difficulties in curriculum construction as proposed by W. W. Charters (Tucker; Richardson Jr.). Taken

together, these works provide a backdrop for understanding the failure of programs at Clark Atlanta University, Alabama A&M, Vanderbilt, and Emory. More significantly, Holley's account raised the question of state and regional power in library organizations. While not stated in analytical or interpretative terms vis-à-vis programmatic closings, his question of regional influence—missed by others—is worth consideration (Holley, "The Development of Library Education in the South" 183–84). Similarly, Holley, Martin, Shiflett, and Tucker pointed to another factor disclosed earlier, that is, external support, but gave the issue additional complexity—in the guise of philanthropy—and marked it for further consideration, especially within the context of Southern institutional failure.

Passet, who took over responsibility for the review essay from Wayne A. Wiegand in the early 1990s, renewed her lament on the lack of historical research in 1994: "It is surprising that more works on the history of library education did not appear during the period under review. … Given the changes occurring in library education today, it is surprising that more historians are not exploring its development during the latter half of the twentieth century" (Passet, "The Literature of American Library History, 1991-1992" 422, 431). At the same time, the first explicit reference to program closure surfaced in her essay when she noted Stieg's "Darwinism at the University."

Edward A. Goedeken took the reins of the review essay from Passet and in his first installment continued to bemoan the scarcity of writing in this area. "Given that many of the most prominent contemporary library historians are members of library school faculties, it is surprising that this area yields such a small literature" ("The Literature of American Library History, 1993-1994" 617). Only one item touched on a school relevant to our inquiry: Robert Brundin's examination of Sydney B. Mitchell and the establishment of library education at Berkeley. Brundin's work functions in a manner similar to Richardson's *Spirt of Inquiry* by providing historical background on another program that eventually closed (Brundin).

As an interested novice in the area of library history, the author was struck by a sense, possibly in need of correction, that recognized historians in this field nibbled at the edges of his primary concern, but never mounted a full frontal assault. Stieg and others offered important general comments on historical sensitivity in professional curricular development (Stieg, "The Dangers of Ahistoricism"; Genz; Krummel). Stieg desired a careful integration of an historical perspective into current issues and instruction that added the "necessary human face to our professions and…a little spice" ("The Dangers of Ahistoricism" 278). An examination of her *Change and Challenge in Library and Information Science* revealed a thought-provoking narrative in many areas, yet offered little interpretation or analysis of the closings. "The 1950s in library education were like the 1950s in the other areas of American life, a period of fundamental stability, with few noteworthy initiatives. The 1960s brought government money and expansion…. Existing library schools increased their enrollments and faculty and new schools were founded" (*Change and Challenge in Library and Information Science Education* 28). Stieg listed twenty-three schools established between 1961 and 1976. Two of those schools, Northern Illinois and Brigham Young, failed in

the early 1990s. She explained the closures, starting with the University of Oregon, by 1970s contractions, that is, a poor job market, and lack of government funds (*Change and Challenge in Library and Information Science Education* 28–29). The upshot of these closings seemed clear to Stieg, even if the reasons were not: a shift of library education from private to public institutions; a realignment in geographical distribution of schools; a change in role, that is, a diminution of regional influence by programs; the consequent negative impact on morale of surviving programs; rising retrenchment apprehension among library educators; and little experimentation in differentiation between programs. "The primary goal [was] survival" (*Change and Challenge in Library and Information Science Education* 29).

Throughout the 1990s, historical interest in library education remained stagnant. In 1998, Goedeken repeated his earlier observation. "Given that a good number of library historians writing today are ensconced as teaching faculty in library schools, it is ironic that the historical literature on library science education is so slim. One can count on the fingers of one hand (almost) the number of writings on this topic" ("The Literature of American Library History, 1995-1996" 418–19). One relevant finger was Martin and Shiflett's examination of the 1941 shift in the primary site for training African American librarians from the Hampton Institute to Atlanta University (Martin and Shiflett). Their work, like that of Richardson and Brundin, provided background to a program that survived, if ever so briefly, into the new millennium. More importantly, Martin and Shiflett answered Holley's "imperfectly understood" question regarding closure of a library education program for African Americans at the Hampton Institute (Holley, "The Development of Library Education in the South" 171).

A more upbeat Goedeken greeted the new millennium in the spring of 2000. "Although not many new offerings appeared in this area, it is a happy circumstance that some of our most prominent writers and thinkers contributed their thoughts to historical aspects of LIS education" ("The Literature of American Library History, 1997-1998" 324–25). Andrew Large and Phillip Jones provided complementary studies and different perspectives on undergraduate and graduate education respectively (Large; Jones). Their questioning of appropriate training levels for librarianship did not directly touch on the issue of program closure, but added context and background to the unending debate—and crisis of confidence—endemic in the profession and library education.

By 2002, the number of historical articles on library education amounted to less than a handful. Goedeken remained hopeful. "Interest in the history of library and information science education seems to be flagging a bit, since only four articles fit the category this time….Since so many library historians dwell within library and information science departments, I remain confident that this dearth of writings in this area is only an aberration" ("The Literature of American Library History, 1999-2000" 150). From this small number only Barbara Flood's insider account of Drexel's information science program has any bearing on our concern (Flood).

The tune stayed much the same in subsequent updates—a proverbial handful of articles, some better than others, very few relevant to the topic of program closure. "I mentioned the last time around that interest in this area seemed to be flagging a

bit—and it still is at about the same rate. (Goedeken, "The Literature of American Library History, 2001-2002" 186). "Pretty slim pickings in the area of LIS education history for this review period " (Goedeken, "The Literature of American Library History, 2003–2005" 455). "Although many of our current practicing historians labor in library schools, not much attention usually is given to the history of library and information science education" (Goedeken, "The Literature of American Library History, 2006–2007" 447).

Most notable in these dry years might be Marcia Bates's memoir of life as a Berkeley student during the late 1960s and early 1970s and her insights on the growing importance of information science (Bates). More directly related to a failed (though later resurrected program) was Steven Fisher's brief history of library education in Colorado and Deborah S. Grealy's "DU Redux" (Fisher; Grealy). Fisher made some brief but intriguing observations on Malcolm Wyer and Wyer's connection with the University of Minnesota that merit further exploration for anyone interested in the Minnesota program. Beverly P. Lynch briefly touched on the closings in her historical summary of library education, noting the professional shock occasioned by the demise of programs at the University of Chicago and Columbia University along with continuing struggles at Berkeley and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Lynch echoed earlier themes. "While the actual reasons for these institutional actions were influenced by local situations, they have their base in the fierce competition on university campuses for resources in terms of faculty, students, dollars, and space" (Lynch).

Lynch made another useful observation on professional schools. "Universities, having embraced vocational education historically by placing professional schools within their purview, may decide that this kind of education is no longer in their mission. That decision certainly played a part in some of the closings of library schools in major research universities, and it has been at the heart of some of the dramatic restructuring of other programs" (Lynch 949). The placement and importance of professional schools within the university was a critical part of early discussions and concern at the University of Minnesota, as we shall soon see.

Our tour of the historical literature, as reflected in the essays of *The Journal of Library History* and its successor titles, brings with it a sense of uneasy transformation. Goedeken noted that "the realm of library and information science education has been buffeted by the winds of change for much of the past decade." Going further, he argued that with the establishment of "iSchools" and title changes to the primary library history journals, there were "plenty of reasons to analyze and critique the historical dimensions of LIS" ("The Literature of American Library History, 2010–2011" 516). Goedeken pointed to Boyd Keith Swigger's exceptionally informative work on the 1951 standards for the master's degree in library science and the exploration of "how librarians and library educators fostered the shared belief that graduate education in librarianship would bestow on the profession improved status, prestige, and income for those laboring in libraries throughout the country" (Goedeken, "The Literature of American Library History, 2010–2011" 516).

In terms of our quest for reasons behind graduate program closings, Swigger saw library education programs strengthened in the 1950s and 1960s because of "the

near monopoly the schools with accredited programs had on library education, to growth in federal funding, to their status as graduate programs, and to changes in universities that made universities more like library schools [through the use of part-time faculty] just as library schools were trying to become more like the rest of the university" (Swigger 80, 83). These strengthening forces created an "enrollment bubble" in the 1960s that "led to creation of more library schools than were viable.…The enrollment crash in the 1970s led to closings of library schools and sharp competition among those that survived." Members of the profession were left "rattled" and nervous (Swigger 80). School enrollment was tied to students' employment prospects (Swigger 40–41). Swigger also identified five other changes in higher education—a growing ordinariness of the collegiate experience, a view of college as a vocational stepping stone, the inadequacy of student preparation and declining academic performance while in college, the lengthening time taken by undergraduates to complete their studies, and the rising costs of a graduate education—that add perspective to our understanding (Swigger 83–86).

A final work to consider is Richard J. Cox's *The Demise of the Library School*. While "painting in broad strokes a personal picture of professional schools in the changing American university," Cox presented an indictment against "the modern corporate university" and criticized a growing vocationalism or credentialism in higher education (Cox xix). Early in his work, Cox pointed to Paris's study along with its scholarly and professional fallout (Cox 1–2). "Many explanations have been offered for why such schools are closed, and these assessments are not particularly new, with complaints about professional schools ignoring classical education foundations extending back to the mid-nineteenth century and worries about creeping specializations in the university appearing in the early twentieth century" (Cox 3). His summary assessment of current concerns seems to point to historically relevant explanatory antecedents.

> The pre-eminent issues facing library schools can be summarized rather easily, although how or whether we deal with them is no easy process, intertwined as they are with matters afflicting the university, as well as what and how we define the general public good. First, these schools may be trying to do too many things with too few faculty and resources. Second, these schools are partially the victim of the corporatization of the university. And, third, these schools have lost, perhaps completely, a sense of what traditionally attracted students to library schools (Cox 4).

Cox offered an iron-handed critique of higher and professional library/information science education wrapped in velvet-gloved essays guided by a mind informed through voluminous reading, writing, teaching, and contemplation.

Case Study: The Library School at the University of Minnesota

"*History haunts me with a sense of lost opportunities*" (Shores 231).

To illustrate the argument that there is more to uncover, analyze, and interpret in the matter of library school closings, let us look at one previously and partially

examined aspect, that is, the administrative location of a professional school of library education within the university. The question of location within the university hierarchy goes back in time to at least the 1923 Williamson report (Williamson). Stieg described this location as "a very mixed blessing" and devoted an entire chapter of her book to the issue (*Change and Challenge in Library and Information Science Education* 61–81).

Our example comes from the Library School at the University of Minnesota. This school was established in 1928, moved from a library setting into a collegiate environment in 1953, and closed in 1985. While the administrative location of the school on the Minneapolis campus was not the primary factor leading to the school's closure, it contributed in a vexing manner to ongoing discussions within the school, among colleagues in related professional schools, and with upper-level administrators. Also, in terms of the school's self-awareness, the question of administrative location was one of the first to surface among the faculty in its concern for the school's continued survival. The issue of location also overlapped other concerns such as centrality of mission, budgetary support, and governance.

At its establishment in 1928, the school had no administrative connection with any college although students enrolled through the College of Science, Literature and the Arts (later the College of Liberal Arts, or CLA). University Librarian Frank K. Walter, who lobbied long and hard for a program of library education, was appointed head of the new school and reported directly to president Lotus D. Coffman. Two-thirds of the original faculty also served as library staff. This pattern of the university librarian directing the library instruction program continued until 1953 with the appointment of David K. Berninghausen as director. That same year, what had been known as the Division of Library Instruction became The Library School as a department in the College of Science, Literature and the Arts. The dean of the college was the former university librarian, Errett W. McDiarmid (Shove).

Minutes from the Library School Council—a governing body consisting of faculty and students—provide a view of the situation in 1973, voiced by Berninghausen. "University retrenchment will continue and at a larger percentage than previously. … We can expect the Education Policy Committee to weigh the value of the CLA professional schools against the College's centrality of mission—a liberal arts education. The College emphasis is on undergraduate and adult special education while the Library School's mission is directed to professional graduate education" (Library School, *Minutes, Library School Council, October 30, 1973*).

One member of the faculty, Nancy J. Rohde, shared Berninghausen's concern about the library school's relationship with CLA. In her mind, "a crisis exists" (Rohde). In a memorandum later shared with faculty, Rohde presented her thoughts. An excerpt reads:

> There are, or have been many advantages to our being located in CLA, and I have argued these advantages with faculty from other library schools who have claimed that they had or would have more prestige as autonomous schools. I did not expect to change my mind on this issue but events of the last few years have convinced me that the Library School will be at a serious disadvantage (if indeed it continues to exist) if it remains in CLA. The Library School's mission is consistent with that of the university but not with that of CLA. … Reluctantly I have come to the decision

> that if the Library School is going to exist at all (or at best prevent being seriously weakened), it must seek another budgetary home. … I would suggest that the library school representatives to the professional schools committee explore with other members of that committee the possibility of forming a new collegial unit of professional schools. Complete autonomy may work in smaller institutions than the University of Minnesota, but it would be disastrous here (emphasis in original) (Rohde).

Berninghausen previously informed his fellow directors in other professional schools as to how he felt about the relationship between the schools and the CLA. In a confidential memo to John Brandl in public affairs, Alan Wade in social work, and Robert Jones in journalism, Berninghausen sought help.

> … I call to your attention the recommendations of the CLA Committee on Educational Policy of June 13, 1973. I hope that my perceptions are faulty, but it appears possible—if not probable—that if these procedures are adopted as recommended, professional schools will be at the mercy of a committee of "academicians" who can decide whether we are to be stable, growing, or declining departments. The major issue, I think, is whether the decision as to the classification of a professional school is properly one to be made by CLA academicians, or by an all university agency. Can CLA's Educational Policy Committee, elected from the Divisional Councils, and with no member from any professional school's faculty, be expected to weigh the value of professional schools in the state and nation properly, when these schools are competing for CLA dollars with academic departments?... In my view, CLA is likely to be increasingly governed by committee, hence the new dean may have less discretion to make decisions to maintain the professional schools. What shall we do about this? (emphasis his) (Berninghausen, *Memorandum to John E. Brandl, Robert Jones and Alan D. Wade, July 26, 1973*)

The answer to that question came during the summer months. At one of the first library school council meetings in the fall of 1973 a major topic of discussion was "the relationship of the professional schools in the College to the College itself." Berninghausen defined the issue:

> The primary mission of the College was to forward a liberal education; that of the professional schools to advance their respective professional education programs. The current budget request from the Dean asks departments to demonstrate their contribution to the College's centrality of mission. The Educational Policy Committee of the College is also emphasizing the centrality of mission concept, and will evaluate departmental programs and budget requests based on this concept. *The four professional schools in the College are concerned by this approach, which could put professional schools at a disadvantage at a time of reallocation of funds* (emphasis mine). (Library School, *Minutes, Library School Council, November 1, 1973*).

At least four members of the faculty expressed their concerns. Joan H. Leigh "referred to the 1971 statement of purpose from the Library School which…asserted the School's close relationship to the College. Any change in

relationship would require deeper consideration than was possible under present time constraints." Wesley C. Simonton "felt the Library School belonged in the College, lacking any evidence to the contrary." Rohde verbalized her own concerns, based on a 1970 CLA report—*New Directions: Liberal Arts Missions and Curriculum in the University*—"which seemed to suggest little future for professional schools in a liberal arts college." E. W. McDiarmid referred to the College constitution "which acknowledge the professional schools under its aegis as one of its major responsibilities." He also pointed out that the "statement of the CLA mission, especially when put alongside the June 13 report of the Educational Policy Committee, seems to be in conflict with the CLA constitution" and suggested faculty take advantage of a provision in the constitution giving them a seat at the table. (The constitution allowed the dean to appoint non-voting ex-officio members to the Educational Policy Committee.) Faculty colleagues urged Berninghausen "to consult with his colleagues on the Professional Schools Committee" and collectively press the dean for such an appointment (Library School, *Minutes, Library School Council, November 1, 1973*).

At the conclusion of this discussion, Berninghausen tipped his hand further. He "indicated that the directors of the four professional schools were all very concerned about recent developments in the College and…considered lobbying to get one of their representatives in the Social Sciences Divisional Council elected to the Educational Policy Committee. The directors of the professional schools had discussed some alternatives such as the placement of the four schools in a unit separate from CLA, or in a separate unit within CLA, and departmental autonomy (the last being very unlikely at Minnesota)." Two members of the faculty, Harris C. McClaskey and Simonton "suggested that although the situation created concern, there was as yet no need for alarm" (Library School, *Minutes, Library School Council, November 1, 1973*). Clearly, the faculty was not of one mind on the relationship to the college or future administrative location of the school. But they all zeroed in on the Educational Policy Committee as worthy of attention, a place where important decisions were being made.

Leigh's reference to the 1971 statement is worth a deeper look. There is no indication of authorship, but the document demonstrates that the question of location was nothing new. Faculty had been thinking about the issue for some time. The document is titled "Professional Schools in the College of Liberal Arts."

> In 1971-1972 the college must examine its operations very carefully and attempt to define its mission precisely. It is clear that the Schools of Social Work, Journalism, Library Science, and Public Affairs need not necessarily be under the administration of the College of Liberal Arts. In fact, over 80% of the accredited graduate library schools are autonomous units, with deans reporting to the presidents or vice presidents, or to the Graduate School deans of their universities.
>
> In the organizational scheme at the University of Minnesota, however, the Dean of the Graduate School has no fiscal responsibility for any graduate department. In this large multiversity there is a need to hold down the number of deans reporting

to an academic vice president. To create a unit of the university that includes all the small professional schools is a possibility, but would require a new position as administrator.

Speaking for the Library School, the removal of our unit from CLA is not desirable in our view, because our curriculum, more than almost any other school in the nation, emphasizes a requirement of 9 to 24 quarter credits of non-library science in our M.A. program. Our faculty considers this a sound basis for preparing M.A. graduates for career entrance as professionally qualified librarians, and we believe the value of instruction by experts in various related fields to be very important. The guidance of research papers and the final oral examination with minor professors are also values we are reluctant to give up….It would obviously not change the mission of the university, and it would not save any funds to remove our professional school from CLA….Finally, the Library School can hardly insist that it should remain in CLA. We prefer to be a part of this college, but could operate effectively outside it (Library School, *Professional Schools in the College of Liberal Arts*).

Two factions existed on the question of the school's location: those who wished to remain in CLA and those who did not. Simonton and McClaskey were not convinced of the crisis. Berninghausen and Rohde expressed concern, if not alarm. McDiarmid pursued the best political play while Leigh sought pragmatic options. Other faculty displayed uncertainty on which way to move.

Berninghausen kept his colleagues on task and had more to report. At a meeting of the Council on November 8, 1973 he alerted faculty to a new situation.

… I have reported to you that four new policy and procedural statements in the College of Liberal Arts can be interpreted as indicating that the mission of the college is now such that professional schools with differing missions are no longer to be considered appropriately located in CLA. You have had for analysis the four statements, and also the literature depicting how the Sub-Committee on Retrenchment and Budget of the Educational Policy Committee is approaching the problem of how to retrench about ¾ million dollars from the CLA budget for 1974-1975. As you will recall, the Library School lost one line item, an assistant professorship in the 1971 retrenchment….

Ralph Shaw once posed a discomforting question to all librarians in relation to the funding available for library and information service: "What would you do if you could have all the funds you could ask for? What programs would you plan and implement in your library?"

…At this date, when universities have lost the confidence and financial support of the public, and when there seems to be doubt that a library school in a liberal arts college can expect additional funding, I nevertheless ask you to focus on Shaw's question, applied to this library school.

Berninghausen concluded by asking faculty to submit one page suggestions "not on how to retrench, but how to strengthen the graduate library education programs in the next five years." He wanted their suggestions by the next day. He seemed worried that CLA budgetary policy was being developed "on the basis of credit hours taught" and that with adult special enrollment thrown into

the CLA financial planning mix "it might have an impact on the professional degree mission of the Library School" (Berninghausen, *Director Berninghausen's Introductory Statement at the Council Meeting, Nov. 8, 1973*).

Unanswered Questions

This small slice of the Minnesota story is just one example, linked to a single factor, of a complex institutional narrative. As Minnesota wrestled with issues surrounding continuation of its graduate library education program, other institutions engaged in similar struggles. Paris's case study of Minnesota (Gamma University) is the most complete account we have of this closing (Paris, *Library School Closings: Four Case Studies* 82–100), but it lacks the extended detail and depth provided by archival sources.

Two short references to the example given above—programmatic location—are given in her account, but the issue is not pursued (Paris, *Library School Closings: Four Case Studies* 89, 96). This is not to fault Paris, but it does raise a question: are historians of American library history happy with this state of affairs? Will we as a profession permit ourselves to be limited to "Alpha," "Beta," "Gamma," and "Delta" accounts or secondary literature explanations for the closings? Will such a limited perspective prompt us to search archives and craft new narratives that help members of the profession understand one of the darker periods in their history? Or will we let the matter sit, unable (for whatever psychological reasons) to confront ourselves?

Leigh S. Estabrook concluded that "LIS schools have moved well beyond the narrow isolation Paris noted—in part, because of her warnings. An examination of the fields from which LIS faculty come and the numbers of courses offered in other departments or cross-listed in LIS reveals strong connections and ties outside of LIS" (Estabrook 301). A historian might want to know if this, indeed, is the case. School closures and their aftershocks call for our attention.

If it is any consolation, historians operating outside librarianship exhibit similar difficulties when writing about troubled times. In the most recent history of the University of Minnesota only one passing mention is made of the Library School; there is no account of its demise (Lehmberg and Pflaum 41). One wonders how many other institutional histories gloss over times like these.

Questions remain. Do contemporary conditions mirror those from the late 1970s to mid-1990s? Is the United States training too many librarians or too few? How many library schools are necessary to sustain the employment needs of our nation's libraries?

Herbert S. White made an observation concerning library school closings which also applies to American library history and our continuing quest for a fuller historical narrative: "Never asking for anything…was signing one's own death warrant" (White 264–65). Danger lurks in the inability to ask or act. We need to do both.

Appendix: Summary of Findings

Taken together, initial examinations of and commentary on library school closures provide a wide-ranging list of possible causes and a running debate on whether these incidents represent a unique, localized phenomenon or are part of a larger pattern or trend. Historical interpretations provided additional candidates to the list. These contributory agents are linked to closings in one of three ways: as external forces, institutional undercurrents, or inherent programmatic conditions. Similarly, these agents can be characterized under broad descriptive headings as social, political, economic, educational, professional, technological, or demographic. These descriptors are fluid and sometimes overlap between categories. Our list of causal suspects includes the following general categorizations:

External causal factors impacting universities:

1. From state or federal government
    - dwindling federal and/or state support for higher education
    - tax cut legislation
    - federal change in status for librarians
2. From economic or societal conditions
    - job market conditions
    - recessionary environments
    - development of more affordable and accessible computing equipment
    - gender balance and diversity
3. From professions or related agencies
    - accreditation reforms and practice
    - relationships with and influence of professional organizations on individual programs
    - aspects of professional state/regional influence or power
    - de-emphasis of the MLS as the terminal professional degree
4. From higher education
    - geographic distribution and adjacency of graduate programs
    - impact and growth of information science/studies
    - available venues for scholarly output
    - poor morale and a crisis of confidence
    - definitions and understanding of "public good"
    - "corporatization" of the university

Internal causal factors within universities:

1. From faculty activity or governance
    - tenure and promotion practices and standards
    - curriculum reform
    - pending retirements

- faculty research productivity
- influence of social science or humanities methodologies on teaching, research, or publication
- assessment of vocational or professional education

2. From disciplines, programs, departments, or colleges
   - specialization
   - over-expansion of graduate programs
   - lack of continued program justification
   - program prestige
   - administrative costs
   - internal and external program reviews
   - turf battles with related programs, e.g. business, computer science, mathematics
   - inability to secure external funding
   - philanthropic activities and influences
   - programmatic isolation from the rest of the university
   - unresponsive and complacent program leadership
3. From administrative practice
   - disconnected or dysfunctional communication
   - intra-organizational conflict and competition for resources in terms of faculty, students, dollars, and space
   - increased use and reliance on strategic planning
   - programmatic assessment that questioned centrality, quality, location, or need of a program
   - administrative awareness of programs
   - lack of an upper-level administrative champion
   - administrative transitions
   - declining university support in salaries, equipment, facilities, student aid occasioned by retrenchment, reassessment, or reallocation actions
   - admission standards
   - change in mission, goals, objectives
   - financial aid costs
   - administrative attitudes
   - employment of and relationships between part- and full-time faculty
   - programmatic attempts to be all things to all people
   - salary differentials between disciplines
4. From student dynamics
   - declining enrollments; part-time versus full-time enrollment
   - student attrition/retention
   - work-life balance

Others, no doubt, can add to this list. There is a hope they might. This inventory is a starting point, based on evidence presented by reading primary sources along with secondary professional and historical literature. But it should be clear, based

on this testimony, that the picture is incomplete. There are other perspectives and accounts to consider, nuanced in their own fashion, waiting to add new shades and subtleties to the portrait. Taken together, I continue to wonder whether data derived from this list could be considered as input variables in a model that allows us to examine contemporary conditions, make meaningful predictions, and steer us away from repeating past mistakes.

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